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measure contravenes a provision of the constitution, or when the executive has information not accessible to the legislative body, or when some occurrence after the passage of the bill renders it probable that the legislature would no longer consider it favorably, as, for instance, if General Sheridan had died after Congress passed the bill reviving the grade of general, and before the bill could be signed and the commission issued. It was to cover such contingencies, and to protect the constitution from infringement, that the veto power was instituted; and it could not have been anticipated that any executive would assume to know more of the merits of each particular measure than the committees that had carefully sifted the evidence and spent days or weeks in considering the arguments. Such an assumption is a piece of effrontery that can never be too strongly rebuked, without reference to the intrinsic character of the measure under consideration. When our government was organized, it was supposed that the presidents could be chosen in a non-partisan manner; hence the machinery of the electoral college. With a non-partisan president, the provision that a veto can only be overridden by a two-thirds majority has some reason, since it may serve to check extreme partisan legislation. But that part of the Federal apparatus has not worked as was expected, and our presidents are generally our strongest partisans. The absurdity now of giving to the individual executive a legislative power equal to two-thirds of that possessed by the two houses of the legislature, is so glaring as not to admit of the slightest debate. The remedy appears to me to be simple. The executive should certainly have the privilege of returning a bill with his objections; but if it is again passed by any majority at all—or, at the least, if by the same majority as before—it should become a law in spite of the veto. If the objections thus formally presented fail to convince enough of the legislators to turn a minority into a majority, it is fair to assume that the objections are not sound. Meanwhile, until such constitutional amendment can be made, if legislators were wise and patriotic they would vote to override every arbitrary veto, no matter on which side of the question they stood when the measure was passed.

ROSSITER JOHNSON.

## VII.

### PERIODICAL LITERATURE IN CANADA.

THE day when the question could be asked with some semblance of sense—who reads an American book?—has long since passed; but if you will substitute Canadian for American you may still have your fling at New World contributions to the library table. The literary barrenness of Canada was commented upon in the *Critic* about a year ago, and the writer of the article attributed it chiefly to the lack of true national life and sentiment. More recently a writer in one of the leading Canadian journals ventured another explanation, to wit, the absence of a first-class Canadian magazine. According to him a good magazine would develop a distinctively Canadian literature, in which the long awaited national novel would take a foremost place, and the reproach of Canada be removed.

Assuming for the sake of argument that the latter theory comes nearer the truth than the former, we are brought at once face to face with the question—why is there no first-class magazine published within the borders of the Dominion of Canada? Were one disposed to quibble a bit over this question, an easy way to begin would be by arguing that Canada was not yet big enough to have a magazine of her own, for she can count but five millions of people, whereas her sister nation to the south had at least six times that many before she could boast a maga-

zine worthy of the name. There is about as much force in this objection, however, as there would be in the reasoning that because the United States had no railways or telephones until their census totalled so many millions, therefore, Canada must await the same stage of development before indulging in these vitally necessary appliances. The question clearly enough is not one of population at all, and some better excuse must be sought for the Dominion's deficiencies.

Is there then no magazine because there would be nothing to fill its pages? The experience of the editors of the principal American periodicals could readily furnish an answer to this question, for there is hardly one that has not scores of MSS. sent him from across the boundary line every year, and who is not now and then well pleased to accept a Canadian contribution. Were merely the "accepted addresses" from Canada during a single year to be gathered together they would undoubtedly be found sufficient in quantity as well as in quality and variety to keep an ordinary magazine well supplied for the same period.

Can it be then that the Canadians do not possess sufficient enterprise to start a magazine, and consequently will leave the undertaking unessayed until some bright American steps over the border and does it for them with the pleasant result of reaping a rich reward for himself? To this very natural inquiry let the volumes of the *Canadian Monthly*, *Stewart's Quarterly*, *Maritime Monthly*, *Provincial*, and other pathetic memorials of profitless publishing make reply. Each one of these periodicals, and especially the first two, possessed merits that made them worthy of a happier fate. But the history of all was the same, a more or less agonizing and vain struggle against neglect and indifference. Out of the many ventures that have been made only one at present survives, the *Canadian Methodist Magazine*, and it owes its vigorous resistance partly to the unique talent of its editor for obtaining material both literary and illustrative without cost, and partly to the fact of its being in some sense the organ of the largest Protestant body in the land.

The simple fact of the matter is that Canada possesses no magazine of her own, because she has such an unceasing flood of English and American periodicals poured upon her that any domestic enterprise must infallibly be drowned beneath its waves. So far as my observation enables me to judge, I would hazard the assertion that as many copies of the leading American periodicals are sold in the larger Canadian cities as in cities of corresponding size in the United States. The NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, *Century*, *Harper's*, *Scribner's*, *Lippincott's*, may be had at any first-class book-store, and one or more will be found in every home where there is the least pretension to culture. This being the case, upon what could the domestic magazine build its hopes of success in competing with so many formidable rivals? Upon superiority of contents? That were hardly possible, even though a syndicate of Croesus should put their purses at its editor's command, for the literary genius of both the Old and New Worlds is already under tribute to supply the "great monthlies," and how would surpassing or even corresponding attractions be secured? Then might the magazine depend upon the loyalty of Canadians to patronize the home product in preference to the imported article? The state of affairs in England does not give much encouragement in this direction, for it may with truth be said that there, at the present time, while the home periodicals sell by thousands, the American monthlies, ay, and weeklies too, go off by the tens of thousands, and if this be the case amongst the most sturdily loyal nation in the world, what may be expected of a people admittedly lacking in true national life and sentiment?

The conclusion seems to be inevitable that there are only two ways in which a distinctively Canadian periodical can be established. Either the policy of protec-

tion must be extended to it, as it has been with success to the sugar and cotton industries, and outside competition made impracticable, or some one of the millionaires, whose numbers are pleasantly increasing in our midst, shall have to adopt the establishment of a magazine as his form of benefaction in preference to endowing a hospital or founding a college for women.

The first method would be suicidal to the intellectual interests of Canada, the second is eminently Utopian, and so the summing up of the whole matter seems to be that there is slight prospect of Canada having a representative national periodical within the near future.

J. MACDONALD OXLEY.

### VIII.

#### THE PHYSICAL DANGERS OF CIVILIZATION.

THE character of civilization is quite as plainly indicated in the common everyday perils which people run as by its laws, its social institutions, or other indices. In the neolithic age, such as our copper-colored predecessors on this continent enjoyed, the careless wayfarer stood in imminent danger of being tomahawked and scalped. In the days of chivalry, when the Christian graces and the sense of personal honor, with all its noble attendant virtues, had begun to dominate men, the hand had not yet ceased to find its most important function in taking care of the head. Midst the splendors of the Italian Renaissance the individual paid the price of prominence in continual risk of the bravo's dagger or the cup of poisoned wine. So one may go on to specialize the current dangers threatening men in different epochs. The dangers which lie in daily ambush for us today are so notably different from those of the earlier periods of civilization that they invite comment. We have become the victims of our own conveniences. This is peculiarly the age of machinery and science applied as art, and we have to pay the penalty in physical risks to life formerly non-existent. We have ceased to stand in much peril of lawless violence except when we travel by coach or rail in Texas or Arizona. Our dangers are railway and steamer accidents, the crush of vehicles in crowded streets, the grip of swiftly running machinery on the careless workman, the dangling electric wire, the treacherous bobtail car, and the like. "The hand of little employnaent hath the daintier sense," remarked the cynical Hamlet of the gravedigger, tossing up skulls with many a quip. The citizen's callous indifference in rushing through a mass of crowded vehicles is well contrasted with the timidity of the rustic, who hesitates long before so perilling his life. Use blunts the edge of perception, and it is only some unusually startling accident that gives us pause. If one could measurably apply the calculus of chances to the risks he undergoes in an active day in the streets of New York he would probably be amazed at the result. Even in this day of still-hunting for news and hunger for a paragraph, not all the accidents are reported. Manufacturers whose operatives are snatched up by a belt, or railway companies whose brakemen slip off the top of a freight car, do their best to suppress such matters. The law of compensation requires us to pay the price for the increased luxuries and facilities offered by the age of science. The problem of social economy is to lower the price to its minimum, as in the case of active commodities. Public attention has been slowly awakened to this question. There is much more disposition than ever before to hold railways responsible in case of accidents to passengers, if official carelessness or neglect can be shown. Boiler inspections are strictly enforced with more and more rigor. The companies, who have harnessed the electrical demon to some man, are held as trustees of very dangerous, if of very useful